A
264.03

REPRINTED BY PERMISSION.

No. 11.

St. Bartholomew's Church Tracts.

I DON'T HOLD WITH THESE FORMS AND CEREMONIES.

(By H. N. T., Brighton, England.)

ST. JOHN, N. B.:
PRINTED BY JAMES SEATON & CO., 85 GERMAIN ST.

Copies of this Tract may be obtained of REV. JOHN M. DAVENPORT,
Saint John, N. B., Canada.
Price 1 cent each; 75 cents per hundred.

"I DON'T HOLD WITH THESE FORMS AND CEREMONIES."

"I DON'T see what's the use of all these forms and ceremonies. I don't hold with them."

Have you ever tried to find out what they mean? Have you ever asked anybody to explain them to you? Have you studied these matters?

"No, I haven't. But I start with the notion that I know all "about religion. What I don't know isn't worth knowing. So "if I see anything in Church which I haven't seen before, or "which I don't understand, I am sure that it must be wrong, and "I call it 'Mummery.' I am always right. The Pope of Rome "is not infallible; but I am."

And do you carry this principle into other matters? If you go over the Railway works or over some great factory you are sure to see quantities of strange machinery which you do not know the use of. Do you call that "Mummery," too?

"No; I say that there must be a use for such things, or they "would not have them. I say that if I had been brought "up to the trade I should understand what they are for. As it is "I can't be expected to know."

Quite so; and religion is a thing which has to be learnt, too. It is said that every Englishman thinks he is a good judge of a horse, and I am sure that nearly every Englishman thinks he knows all about religion. But this is not really the case. I have read of a man named Dogberry who said that reading and writing come by nature. If you were to ask your children, though, or your children's schoolmaster, they would tell you a different tale. And religion doesn't come by nature either. You see a man standing outside a Church and staring up at the stained-glass windows. "Is that the stained-glass which they make such a fuss about?" says he. "I don't see anything to admire in it; it's all a mass of "confused colours." Yes, my good friend (you say to him), but

you are on the wrong side. You must go *inside* the Church if you want to see the beauty of the windows. If a savage found a printed book, what would he make of it? "A lot of black marks "without rhyme or reason," he might say, "I call it mummery." But you who can read would not agree with this opinion. You would say, "It is your ignorance which causes you to talk like "that. Learn to read the book, and then you will value it. Till "you can read it you are not fit to express an opinion." And so it is with religion. You, my dear reader, are like the savage with the printed book. (Don't be angry with me for saying so.) You go to Church and you see forms and ceremonies and you don't understand them, and, therefore, you don't see the good of them. Of course not. How should you? But this is because, though you were born in a Christian land, you have never been taught these things. Just as in the Bible story (Acts viii. 30, 31) when the Eunuch was asked, "Understandest thou what thou readest?" he answered, "How can I except some man should guide me?" Let me explain to you the meaning of the forms and ceremonies which you see in Church, and then next time you go you will be able to read it all off like a printed book.

Now, to begin with, what is it which you don't understand? "Oh!" you say, "I don't see the good of all this bowing and "scraping." Very well, then we will begin with Bowing and Scraping.

This offends you because your idea is that when people worship they should sit down. You go to Church to "hear "something good." You are like the Village Blacksmith in the song, you "hear the Parson pray and preach." He does all this and you sit and listen to him. Yours is a religion of hearing. This is why you think your pew the most important part of the Church, and why you are so anxious that it should be comfortable. When you go to Church you think you patronise the clergyman. You call it "Mr. So-and-So's Church." If he does anything which offends you, you leave off going to Church. You go if you like and stop away if you like. It is your own affair, you think. With you Church is a place where GOD is talked about, not where GOD is worshipped.

But all this is a great mistake. Church is GOD'S House, not yours. You are only a guest there. You are there on sufferance. You mustn't make too free there. You mustn't be "free and

"easy." "How dreadful is this place. This is none other but "the House of GOD, and this is the Gate of Heaven." You would think so if your eyes were opened. There are Angels in the Church by your side, looking at you. When St. Paul told the women at Corinth that they must wear something on their heads in Church, he gave this reason,—"Because of the Angels" (1 Cor. xi. 10). When the Angels worship GOD they fall on their faces. How they must wonder when they see you *sitting down* to pray, and perhaps leaning forward face in hat, or holding a handkerchief to your face!

We bow to the Altar in Church. We do so because it is GOD'S throne. In the House of Lord's, at Westminster, there is the Queen's throne. It is the custom of the lords when they go across from one side of the House to the other to turn and bow to the Queen's throne. Of course, this is a mark of respect to Her Majesty. When the Queen is present they do a great deal more. They walk backwards before their Sovereign; they never turn their backs on her. Just in the same way we bow to our friends when we meet them, as a mark of respect. Soldiers, too, are taught to salute their officers and the flag of the regiment. If it is right to bow to earthly friends and to the symbol of an earthly monarch, surely it is right to do it to the Altar-throne of the King of kings.

But here you break in with a very heavy charge. You say, "It is idolatry to bow to the Altar, it breaks the 2nd Command-"ment." Well, but do the lords and the soldiers worship the Queen's throne and the flag? If you meet a lady in the street and bow to her, do you commit idolatry? Do you suppose that we worship anyone or anything but GOD Almighty? Do *you?* Could you imagine yourself doing it? And do you suppose that *we* are so foolish (to say nothing of so wicked) as to do such a thing? Isn't it rather childish to talk like this? Is it right to charge your fellow-Christians with such a dreadful sin in this off-hand way? What if you are bearing false witness against your neighbour?

"But (you say) supposing you don't *worship* the altar, or the "altar-cross, or crucifix, you break the 2nd Commandment by "*having* it at all. Doesn't the Commandment say that you are "not to *make* 'the likeness of anything in heaven above?'" And

"isn't our LORD in 'heaven above?'" Very well, now. If you take up this argument you shall see how far it will lead you. The Commandment also says that you are not to make "the likeness "of anything in earth beneath." Now, do you happen to have any pictures, or illustrated books, or photographs, or coins with Queen Victoria's head on them? All these are likenesses of things in the earth beneath. So if it is breaking the 2nd Commandment to have a Crucifix in Church, it is breaking it to have a penny in your pocket. You ought, on your own showing, to throw that penny into the sea so that no one else may sin by having it. See what it is to use a bad argument. You thought you had got hold of a stick that was good enough to beat a poor Churchman with; and, behold, the same stick gives you a rap over the knuckles. You can't take just as much of an argument as suits you. If you have it at all, you must have the whole of it. And now perhaps you see you have interpreted the Commandment wrongly. "Well, what does it mean then?" I will tell you. When GOD gave the Commandments He had not revealed Himself in any visible shape. So if the Jews made any image to represent GOD they would have to make it in the form of some creature which they had seen, *e. g.*, a calf. But GOD is not like a calf, and, therefore, He said they must make no images. The meaning of the 2nd Commandment was this: They were to worship God in His Own way. Not in any way which they thought would do as well. A Jew might say, "I could worship "GOD better if I had a representation of Him before me." But the answer would be, "It isn't for you to choose, but for GOD. "And He has said to you, No images. You must worship Him "in His Own way." But since the Commandment was first given GOD *has* shewn Himself in a visible form. GOD the SON has become Man. So we are right in making pictures and representations of Him. Of course, we do not worship the pictures. We are not so foolish. We use them to bring home to our minds the thought of our LORD. So the *letter* of the 2nd Commandment is changed for us Christians, just as the *letter* of the 4th Commandment is changed. We do not keep holy the Sabbath Day, *i. e.*, the 7th day, Saturday; we keep Sunday, the LORD'S Day, the 1st day of the week. The spirit, however, or real meaning of the Commandment remains the same. It is that we are to worship GOD in His Own way, by belonging to the religion which He set

up, the Holy Catholic Church, and having nothing to do with all man-made religions.

We also bow at the Holy Name of JESUS whenever we hear it said. One of the laws of the Church (Canon 18) says: "When in the time of Divine Service the LORD JESUS shall be "mentioned, due and lowly reverence shall be done by all persons "present, as it has been accustomed." Our LORD has many names, but the reason why this particular name was chosen for special honour is because it is the name of His humiliation. It is the name by which He was known as a Child and as a Man, the name which was put up over His Cross. Because the LORD humbled Himself for us, therefore we pay Him special reverence whenever we are reminded of it. For the same reason people kneel down in the Creed in the Communion Service at the words, "And was Incarnate by the HOLY GHOST of the Virgin Mary, "and was Made Man." It is well that we should remember our manners when we have to do with GOD. Many persons seem to have no manners at all. They speak to GOD as if they were on an equality with Him, and sometimes almost as if they were the LORD and He their servant. They speak to God in a manner in which they would not dream of speaking to their employer. GOD does not like this careless irreverence. We are told to "Serve "the LORD with fear and rejoice unto Him with reverence" (Ps. ii. 11). The Bible says, "Keep thy foot when thou goest "into the House of GOD, and be more ready to hear than to give "the sacrifice of fools" (Eccles. v. 1), GOD notices these things. When our LORD was on earth a man asked Him out to dinner, but neglected to pay Him the usual tokens of respect. The LORD noticed it and spoke of it afterwards. "Thou gavest Me no water "for My Feet," He said (St. Luke vii. 44). To bow at the Name of JESUS, our LORD and our GOD, helps us to remember Who He is and who we are. It is not a mark of being spiritual to be careless and irreverent in public worship. On the contrary, it is to offer "the sacrifice of fools."

Another act of reverence is *the Sign of the Cross.* It was marked on us by the Priest when we were christened. We mark it on ourselves at other times. The Cross was once the most disgraceful thing in the world. It was worse than the gallows is to us. Only the lowest and worst criminals were put to death on

the Cross. A Jew thought he could say nothing worse to a Christian than that "Your Master was crucified." But Christians, instead of being ashamed, gloried in the Cross. They used to sign themselves with it on all sorts of occasions. The early Christian writers often mention the custom. It has come down to ourselves. We make the Sign of the Cross to show that we are not ashamed of CHRIST Crucified, and to remind ourselves that we must take up our own cross. The Sign of the Cross, if it is made reverently, never fails to drive away evil thoughts. In making it we touch first our forehead, then our breast, then our left shoulder, and lastly our right shoulder.

There is no ceremony used by the Church in public worship which is more Scriptural than the use of *Incense.* All the arguments in favour of having music in Church apply equally to Incense. Incense was ordered by GOD to be used by the Jews (Exod. xxx. 7-9, Levit. xvi. 12, 13). It is mentioned in the Psalms. David says, "Let my prayer be set forth in Thy Sight "as the Incense" (Ps. cxli. 2). The prophet Malachi, speaking of Christian times, says: "In every place Incense shall be offered "unto My Name and a Pure Offering, for My Name shall be "great among the heathen, saith the LORD of Hosts" (Mal. i. 11). The "Pure Offering" means the Holy Eucharist, the chief service of the Church, because it is then especially that Incense is used. The Wise Men offered Incense to our LORD in His cradle (St. Matt. ii. 11). In St. John's vision of Heaven we read about Incense. In Rev. viii. 3, it says: "And another angel came and "stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given "unto him much Incense that he should offer it with the prayers "of all Saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne." And in Rev. v. 8, "The four Living Creatures (R.V.) and four and "twenty Elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of "them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers "of Saints." Now, what does the Incense mean? Sometimes people say that it represents prayer. This is a mistake. It represents the merits of CHRIST. It is the "golden vials" (or censers) which are compared to the prayers of Saints (or baptised Christians). Just as in a censer the Incense is offered to GOD, so in our prayers we plead the merits of CHRIST. As when we say "through JESUS CHRIST." The Incense is to be offered "*with* the prayers of Saints." And thus incense when it is used

in Church brings before our minds the great evangelical doctrine of the insufficiency of human merits. That is, that our prayers and good works are not worthy to go up to GOD of themselves, but they do go up to Him because they are offered in union with the merits of His dear SON.

We have candles on the altar in token of joy and gladness, especially at Holy Communion. But people say, "How very "odd to burn candles in the daylight!" Yes, it is meant to strike the eye and make you understand that the service which is going on is very wonderful and extraordinary. It is the most wonderful thing which happens. And you know there are "seven lamps of fire burning before the throne" in heaven (Rev. iv. 5), although it is so light there that "they *need* no candle, neither light of the sun" (Rev. xxii. 5).

We ring the great bell of the Church at the consecration of the Holy Eucharist in order to let sick people know, and others who could not come to Church, that we have got to the most solemn part of the service, so that they can join their prayers with ours. And we ring a little bell in Church to stir up the congregation to more devotion. You are not obliged to practise all the acts of reverence which I have mentioned. You need not practise any unless you like. If you do them in a proper spirit they will help you. But anyhow, don't say, "I won't do "them, and no one else shall either," because that would be acting like the dog in the manger.

THE FOLLOWING TRACTS HAVE BEEN ALREADY ISSUED IN CANADA:

Is it Right to have a Grand Ritual in Church?
"I don't want any Man to come between my soul and GOD."
Why does the Church Pray for the Dead?